

34. At illi dixerunt : Quia Dominus cum necessarium habet.

35. Et duxerunt illum ad Jesum, et jactantes vestimenta sua supra pullum, imposuerunt Jesum.



To indicate Bethphage the Latin text of Saint Matthew uses the word castellum, which would imply a village with its castle or tower of defence. In fact, the sanctuary of Bethphage, which has now been identified as marking the spot where Jesus mounted the colt, is situated at the base of a mount, the summit of which is covered with very numerous fragments of pottery, a characteristic peculiarity of sites formerly inhabited. Moreover, this lofty spot above Bethany, from which can be seen the declivities sloping down to the Dead Sea, with the valley leading to Herodium and to Bethlehem, with all the districts on the south of Jerusalem, must, in virtue of its remarkable position, have constituted an important strategic point. It must, in fact, have been a stronghold of war; hence the choice of the name of castellum to designate the village of Bethphage.

We are completely in the dark as to which disciples were chosen to go and fetch the ass and her foal to Bethphage; all manner of conjectures have been hazarded, but not one with any foundation in fact. All we know is that the Master's instructions with regard to them were very precise; He was anxious to spare His messengers all difficulty, and told them what they were to answer in the very probable event of the owner of the two

34. And they said, 'The Lord hath need of him.

35. And they brought him to Jesus : and they cast their garments upon the colt, and they set Jesus thereon.



animals protesting against their being taken. « Say ye that the Lord hath need of them », words which very clearly indicate the character Jesus intended to give to His triumphal entrance into Jerusalem. He is the Lord Who has a right of ownership in all the possessions of man and He exercises this right with discretion.

It is noteworthy that on comparing the text of the various Evangelists, we find three of them, Saint Mark, Saint Luke and Saint John, speaking of a colt only, whilst Saint Matthew mentions an ass and a colt. The words of Saint Luke, however, in chap. 19,

verse 30, put us on the track of a perfectly natural explanation. The colt had never yet been mounted, and, therefore, there might be some fear that it would be restive, so they took its mother with it. Still, Saint Matthew certainly expresses himself rather strangely in this matter, for he says : « And (they) brought the ass and the colt and put on them their clothes and they set him thereon. » On which of the two does Saint Matthew mean that the Lord was set? On their clothes on one of the two animals, or first on one and then on the other? After what we have just said, the latter hypothesis is not tenable, but, then, why should the garments have been put on both? And, moreover,



The Procession of the Apostles.

J.-J. L.